

**STATEMENT BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF GENERAL SYNOD
CONCERNING
THE CONSECRATION OF A PRIEST IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF
AUSTRALIA
AS A BISHOP IN THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

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The General Synod Standing Committee has issued background information about the recent consecration of a priest of the Anglican Church of Australia as a bishop in the Traditional Anglican Communion. The Traditional Anglican Communion is a body which is not in communion with the Anglican Church of Australia. Father David Chislett, Rector of All Saints' Church, Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, and deputy chair of Forward in Faith Australia, was consecrated in a ceremony held in the USA on 16 February. Consequently Archbishop Phillip Aspinall of Brisbane has suspended Fr Chislett's licence as Rector of All Saints' and as a priest of Brisbane Diocese, while the issues are considered. General Synod Standing Committee has endorsed and supported Archbishop Aspinall's actions, as has the meeting of Australian Bishops, when it met in Adelaide in the week beginning February 28.

Archbishop Aspinall has outlined the various steps he took to listen to the concerns of Forward in Faith Australia before the consecration of Fr Chislett. In June 2004, Archbishop Aspinall learnt that the national council of Forward in Faith had nominated Fr Chislett to be consecrated as a bishop to provide alternative episcopal oversight for parishes opposed to the ordination of women. He then met with Fr Chislett on several occasions. In November 2004, he met with the churchwardens, parish council and trustees of the parish of All Saints', Wickham Terrace. The meeting also included Fr Chislett and Fr David Robarts, Chair of Forward in Faith Australia. In a letter to his clergy, issued in December last year, Archbishop Aspinall said he was committed to "pursuing a dialogue with all concerned in the hope that the pastoral needs of all members of the Anglican Church can be adequately and sensitively met".

In January 2005, together with the Primate, Dr Peter Carnley, and the Archbishop-elect of Perth, Bishop Roger Herft, Archbishop Aspinall met with Fr Robarts, Fr Chislett, and Archbishop John Hepworth, Primate of the Traditional Anglican Communion. The meeting was "very cordial", he said: "Our time was given to exploring the background to the current situation and canvassing of issues and options as we move forward. This covered the same basic territory as Fr Chislett and I traversed in our conversations over the previous few months." The main benefit of the meeting was to "establish lines of communication and to begin the process of understanding the situation and issues we face", he said.

However, Archbishop Aspinall was not notified that the consecration was to take place. He learnt of it from media reports. "I am very disappointed that, despite our best efforts to listen to Forward in Faith and initiate ongoing dialogue with them, the consecration still went ahead. It has created considerable confusion and distress and has made future dialogue more difficult."

End.